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SPECIAL ON-THE-RECORD BRIEFING

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ON

ON THE GUYANA INCIDENT

Monday, November 20, 1978

Briefing #5

(On the Record unless Otherwise Noted)

MR. RESTON: Mr. John Bushnell, who is Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for American Republic Affairs.

MR. BUSHNELL: I have been handling the task force which we have set up over the weekend to manage the situation in Guyana.

I might start by trying in very broad sweep to give you the situation in a prepared statement and then I'll respond to your questions. This can all be ON THE RECORD. If we come to anything that I want to deal with only ON BACKGROUND I will do so.

We know now that there has been a great calamity in Guyana involving a large number of American citizens. There have been coldblooded murders and apparently many suicides.

Yesterday we managed to evacuate the injured from the attacks on the Congressional delegation at Port Kaituma. Today our attention is concentrated on the situation in Jonestown, the center of the Peoples Temple in Guyana.

The entire situation is complicated by the very large logistical problems. Jonestown is about 150 miles from Georgetown, the capital, by air. There are only a

couple of very small dirt strips in the area, and they are several miles from the compound on the center of Jonestown itself.

This morning the situation was further complicated by torrential rains, which are not uncommon in that part of the world. We expect shortly to have official American personnel in Jonestown. In fact, I've just talked to the Ambassador in Georgetown and he believes that some American personnel have now arrived in Jonestown; and we hope within a couple of hours to have adequate radio communication with them. We do not have that at the moment.

At the moment we have the information passed to our Embassy by the Guyanese police who entered Jonestown last night. This is fragmentary and incomplete but indicates a number of dead currently estimated by the Guyanese police at about 400.

Throughout this incident, the Government of Guyana has been cooperating fully with us. Thus far all the reports indicate that the incidents only involve Americans. Of course, major crimes have been committed in Guyanese territory and that government recognizes its

responsibilities in this area.

Early on in this crisis, the United States Government offered whatever assistance might be needed to the Guyanese Government. Given the magnitude of the problem, the Guyanese Government has asked us for assistance, particularly in the field of transportation, and we are making urgent arrangements to introduce military helicopters into the area. We are also supplying a number of other non-lethal items, such as radios, to the Guyanese police and security forces operating in the Jonestown area.

Although a considerable number of American -- largely military -- personnel will be involved in the support operation, at this point the primary legal responsibility for bringing those who are guilty to justice remains with the Guyanese Government. As I have said, they are cooperating fully with us and have formed this morning a cabinet-level committee to coordinate their efforts in this very unfortunate situation that has occurred on their territory.

Let me stop with that as a prepared statement and take whatever questions you might have.

Q Could you say -- any comment about the major crimes committed and the Guyanese Government

recognizes its responsibility -- do you mean by that that you have had discussions with them regarding the extradition of any of these people under the treaty that we have with Guyana?

A We have not at this point had any discussions on extradition. The evidence -- the facts that we have -- I wouldn't call it "evidence" at this point -- the fact that we have indicate that crimes such as murder have taken place in Guyana. These are crimes in Guyana; they are not crimes in the United States. And initially this would involve trial under the Guyanese law and procedures, and they recognize that situation.

It is conceivable that there are crimes that have taken place in the United States, particularly involving such issues as conspiracy. That question is under investigation by our law enforcement authorities. Conceivably, that could result at some point in a request for extradition. But that is a more uncertain situation than the situation we have on the ground there today.

Q Do you have any idea [illegible] the location of --

Q I want to follow up [illegible] point specifically because Mr. Holsinger, who I understand is an aide to the

late Congressman Ryan, has already charged that the State Department ignored requests -- or, rather, that the Guyanan Government ignored U. S. court order requests that Jones be extradited. Do you know anything about that at all?

A To my knowledge, there was not an official request communicated in the normal way for the extradition of Jones from Guyana. I would say on this subject that there have been a number of legal problems which have arisen in the interface between large numbers of Americans and the Guyanese system. These have particularly involved the custodianship of children who were in the colony in Guyana where one or another parent or relative wished to claim them. Action has been taken in some of these cases in Guyanese courts, and this has been an issue of some discussion from time to time -- certainly between our Embassy and the Guyanese authorities -- but I know of no formal extradition request having been made for Mr. Jones.

Q Mr. Kolsinger also said, Mr. Bushnell, yesterday that Congressman Ryan was very concerned and had complained to his staff that the information coming from our Embassy there was inadequate -- that he was

getting less than the in-depth analysis that he was requesting based upon reports from his constituents that they had relatives who were being held involuntarily in the encampment.

A Let me just say that the Consular Section of our Embassy has made regular visits to Jonestown in order to provide consular services. Because of the substantial volume of requests which they had from American-citizen family members suggesting that members of their family were being held in Jonestown against their will, they tried in these cases, where this was brought to their attention, to have private face-to-face discussions with these people in Jonestown. They had a large number, a substantial number -- I don't have an exact figure -- over the course of the last many months of such discussions. They did not find any case where meeting face to face with the person in Jonestown that that person indicated they were being held there any way against their will.

What they found was reported back to the concerned family members.

It obviously was not possible, given the remoteness of Jonestown and our limited consular staff and

so forth, to always respond as rapidly as concerned family members might like nor with as much detail as they might like; but I think that in the cases on which we were made aware the Consular Officers did have face-to-face contact in Jonestown with the involved family members.

Q Do you think that they were --

Q Mr. Bushnell, is there anybody left alive in Guyana to extradite -- according to the reports you've had?

A There are certainly a number of people who have been associated with the Peoples Temple colonely there who are still alive. There are a small number who have at this point made their way into Georgetown and there are some others that have made their way to various police points in remote areas of the country. Whether or not any of these people were involved in any of the deplorable criminal actions, we have no way of knowing at this time. The last report that we have from the Guyanese police on the ground in Jonestown is that they do not -- they have not found any living persons there.

Q What about the nine that were supposedly arrested? Wait a minute -- what are the nine who were

supposedly arrested? What has become of them?

A I am not aware of some number of nine supposedly arrested. But there are a number of people who have come in to police posts remote from Jonestown, a number of miles from Jonestown. These people are under police custody at the moment -- if we want to use the word "custody" -- until the situation is sorted out. Whether or not any of them are responsible for any sort of crime has certainly not yet been determined. That is presumably being looked at in some respect.

There is one case that I know of -- and there may be other cases -- where the Guyanese authorities have denied--refused to allow Americans associated with the People's Temple to leave the country because of the potential suspicion at least that they were involved.

So far as I know, there is no one yet arrested charged with the crime. There have only been -- and we're in the very initial stages; we should keep in mind of this. There are the people that have made their way to these police points; they are being questioned and so forth.

Q Do you have any idea, Mr. Bushnell, where Jones, Garry, and Mark Lane are?

A In the way hours of this morning I was

informed that both Lane and Curry are in the hotel in Georgetown.

Q Where is Jones?

A I do not know where Jones is.

[Cont'd on pg. C-1.]

Q Mr. Bushnell, Mr. Holsinger said some other things to Reporters yesterday. He said that Congressman Ryan had asked State to investigate this, but was assured there was no cause for alarm and he said directly they told us everything was fine among the Temple followers in Guyana; they said it was a private matter between private citizens and Iran should not get involved.

Now, that is a fairly serious charge. I wonder if you could respond to that?

A I think given the level of understandable emotion that we have surrounding this whole issue and we have upstairs in the Operation Center a number of people who have been on the phone to relatives and so forth over the last 48 hours, there are a lot of things being said. There is in this sort of situation one which, fortunately I might say, we in the State Department don't become involved in all the time. But in the sort of family tensions that arise, in this sort of situation, there is the feeling frequently that, one, that the Government, whatever the Government is, and in this case it tends to be our Embassy in Guyana,

is not able to satisfy all of the questions, all of the aspects, that concern family members raised. I think that is understandable.

I would say that we had a series of Briefings for the Congressman and his staff before he made this trip. We pointed out to him, on the one hand, that our Consular Officers had been regularly visiting Jonestown; none of them had ever been molested in any way; these visits had been open; that they had been able to talk to whoever they wanted to, as I indicated earlier. Nonetheless, we pointed out to him that it was well known to him, as well as to us, that the camp had armed guards; that it was in a very remote area; very hard to reach; there was not a significant Guyanese law enforcement presence in the area. Nonetheless, I think that we have certainly found it in the State Department very difficult to say to any Congressman that he should not visit other American citizens, particularly those who are his constituents, wherever in the world. He might find them.

We did feel that because he had been visited personally by a number of people who had left that

settlement in Guyana and who had first-hand information of what went on there -- they have also visited us and given us explanations, which we presume were similar to the explanations given to him -- that, in fact, he was as aware of the situation there; as aware of some of the plans and the procedures of this group of people; as we were.

We discussed all these problems with him and his staff in detail. We pointed out the very real limits of any American Embassy anywhere in the world in terms of security for visiting people, but we had to leave, and I think it was proper for us to leave to him, the choice of whether or not he made the visit and the final arrangements for doing so.

Q Has the Department made contact with Gary and Lane and has it learned anything from them or anyone else as to what sparked it exactly, what went on beyond what we have in the Press Reports?

A I would say, to be perfectly frank with you, this morning some of our Consular Officers in Georgetown talked for an hour and a half with Mr. Lane. They have prepared a report, which I'm at this point

arriving here. I have not read it. But we have been in contact. We have obviously substantial problems and will have of the Privacy Act in terms of revealing what is in the cable to the press even after we have looked at it, but it may give us some additional information.

Q Can you be a little more specific on the inter-relationship between the United States and local authorities?

In other words, you spoke before of questioning. Are American officials or will they be present at such questioning, participate? It is sort of a joint investigation? Or are you confident that somehow, you know, they are doing the job and you will hear about it?

How inter-related or how involved is the U.S. Government in the investigation?

A The basic responsibility for the investigation and, of course, the basic capability to do it is with the Guyanese. We have offered assistance of various sorts. They have taken us up on the offer of particularly transport and things like this. We anticipate

having a number of legal attaches -- those are attaches of the FBI -- going to Guyana as soon as we can arrange it. These are people that would have had expertise with the sort of situation that has arisen there that could help them with interviewing and so forth.

We have indicated that we will make available laboratory work and other sorts of things like that from the United States.

At this stage in the investigation, which is the very initial stages, we are essentially standing open to provide whatever might be useful that they would require and until the investigation advances we will not know precisely what that will be.

Q Mr. Bushnell, at this point are you clear at all on how many of the American deaths that were reported this morning were suicides and how many were murder..?

What do the Guyanese Police report to your people?

A Frankly, we are not clear on that until we get the reports from our own people in that area.

The initial report that we had indicated that

at least many or most of the bodies which they had seen seemed to have no signs of external trauma or damage. That, however, was not a complete inventory. I would not want to rule out that there are bodies with that sign, but at least the initial report from the people initially arriving indicated that the bodies that they seem to be inspecting and seeing closely did not have any signs of external damage.

Q That would still leave about 700 Americans not accounted for. There are 400 bodies and yesterday you people said there were 1100 people there.

A I want to stay away, if we can, and I think it is going to raise a lot of hopes, perhaps unnecessarily in this country with too much of a numbers game.

Our estimate of 1100 Americans in that colony was an estimate as of some months ago. It is not something which we have any facility for keeping up to date every time there is a birth, every time anybody leaves, and so forth.

It was at that time an approximate figure. It

is conceivable certainly, although we have no evidence, that a substantial number even of people have left the colony over the intervening time. We do not know that.

So that, we do not know whether or not if we added up what is also a rough estimate of 400 bodies -- There may be more bodies yet to be found. We cannot rule that out -- the number of people that we have identified as having arrived in Georgetown, arrived at police posts, and so forth, which is less than 100, and people who may still be out in the bush in the jungle, whether we have a statistical situation with people that seem to be missing or not until we get much more information.

Q Mr. Bushnell, when was the last visit? State keeps saying that Consular officials made periodic visits to Jonestown.

Can you tell us when Consular officials from Georgetown made their last visit there?

A I cannot. At this moment I don't have in front of me that date. I think we can get you that date.

Q And did they have some idea at that time

of how many people were there?

Certainly they should be able to tell if they saw 400, 500 or a thousand, etcetera.

A We will get you a date as to when the last Consular visit was there, but I don't think that a Consular Officer going in for a day doing his business necessarily is able to read very well how many people there are there. There are people that are out in the fields, there are people on other chores, and so forth. I don't think that by the visit one would come up with any particularly good notion of how many people were there.

Q John, is it possible to get a chronology of Consular visits in recent months, including those that related to the specific complaints from relatives?

A We can prepare for you, I think, from the records of the Embassy -- we will probably have to contact them to do this -- a list of the dates over 1978, let's say, at which Consular Officers visited Jonestown.

In all of these visits they took up some problems raised by family members. So that, the list of visits would include -- all these visits would involve

that problem.

Q Sir, in those visits that those Consular Officers made, I think you said in your opening remarks that they had not come up with any instance in which in a private conversation with a member of the community those people expressed either the fact that they wanted to leave or that they were being held against their will.

But in your Briefings with Congressman Ryan and his staff, certainly they presented indications to the contrary, indications which may have turned out to be true, if we can credit those things that have been said by the survivors of the incident at the airport the other day.

Now, I am wondering how the Department and the Congressman's staff managed to reconcile in the Briefings that were held before he went down there what appeared to be an inconsistency of the status of the people who were living in that compound; your Consular Officers saying that everything was all right down there and Ryan's people coming up with, I would assume, a substantial number of indications to the contrary?

A All that our Consular Officers could physically do, recognizing that we did not have a Consular post in the community or anything like that, is to sit down with a person and talk with them and give them every opportunity in private to raise any complaints with the situation of that nature, that they couldn't leave if they wanted to leave, that they would want to raise. They did not do so.

Now, whether, in fact, even some of these people who may subsequently have left the camp felt that there was some constraint on them, which they didn't bring up with the Consular Officer, I could not speak to.

The role of the Consular Officer, -- remember these are American citizens, both in the camp and complaining -- is limited certainly in terms he is not engaged in investigation. He was engaged in talking with them face to face and giving them an opportunity to raise problems that they felt they might have had.

We do know, of course, that there are a number of people who did leave the camp.

Q Do you know if any of those who did leave

are among those that your people had visited previously and had been told that we don't want to leave; if any of those people that came to Ryan and said I do want to leave had given a conflicting story to your own people?

A I do not have an answer to that.

You posed two questions..

I don't believe that any of the people that went to Ryan had been in that category. It may well be that people that had left were in that category.

Q I was asking about do you know if the set of people that wanted to leave with Ryan, if any of those people had been previously contacted during these Consular visits?

A This is of the six to ten people who were leaving with him.

We do not at this moment even have a complete set of names for those people. So, until we get that we cannot address that.

(Continued on C-1.)

Q Can you just clarify one thing for me? In answer to Ted's question earlier, you said that you did not have any record of a formal record of a request for extradition of Jones. Could you clarify, had there been other requests, a non-official request, or anything of that sort? I mean, what is the background of that that you chose your language so carefully?

A I would say that for extradition requests that come through courts, through the State Department, there is a procedure. I don't think that there is such a thing as an informal request for extradition. Extradition is a legal procedure. You either do it formally or presumably not at all.

Now, I cannot rule out that there may be a law enforcement officer somewhere in the United States that may have said that he would like to have Jones back under his control in some sense. That is not an extradition request. An extradition request requires a legal procedure.

Q Just to clarify that, was the Department approached, either State or Justice, by such a law enforcement officer requesting extradition of Mr. Jones?

A Well, this Department and the other Departments of the government are very big places. If we were approached formally, the State Department would certainly have proceeded formally with it.

I cannot say for all the people in this building and other buildings that noboby ever had a conversation about it.

Q Do you know of any attempts, or was the FBI interested in getting to Mr. Jones, do you know?

A I think that is a question that you have have to ask the FBI.

Q Well, do you know of attempts?

A I do not personally know of any attempts by -- and it would come to my attention essentially if it was a formal thing. Whether there was any interest, discussions, I do not have any knowledge of it.

Q John, you can understand that there is a tremendous amount of interest at this point in precisely what happened at Jonestown, and you have indicated that a number of people from Jonestown are now in Georgetown, where presumably they have been debriefed by local police, and where presumably some of your people have been in touch.

Would you give us as much as you can of what you know?

A I will say that we are in the process of this. In the course of the morning, there have been such contacts as you have mentioned. The people that have had these contacts are writing this up, and we do not physically have it here. I have not felt that this was something I should go into in depth over the phone. It is better to get that in writing. So, we will have those reports coming in to us, and at this point I cannot say any more than that.

We do have reports from Guyanese authorities that a suicide pact of some sort was implemented, that some people fled the camp area, the compound, the area called Jonestown, as that process was underway.

Now, that is the extent of the reports that we have heard. I am not even saying that that is what we know because I don't want to give that the full gloss of being a fact. But until we can actually get a series of conversations with people who were in the compound at the time, we will not have a very good understanding of what did happen.

Q Mr. Bushnell, let me just follow up, if I may, because yesterday there was some information which came out of this Department to the effect that a message was sent from Jonestown to the Headquarters of the sect in Georgetown requesting an additional aircraft, because, so the message said, some extra people wanted to leave. Is that accurate, first of all? And, secondly, how does that fit in with what obviously happened thereafter?

A That is essentially adequate, as I understand it. The embassy, of course, was responsible for providing transport, arranging transport, for the Congressional delegation, as is normal for Congressional delegations.

The embassy does not, and did not, at that time, have any communications, and has never had any communication with Jonestown. There are no telephones. There are no communications.

My understanding is that the people at Jonestown have communicated by essentially short-wave amateur radio, (Georgetown?) including communicating with their office in Jonestown.

At about noon, Georgetown time, on Saturday,

the embassy was called by the Georgetown office of the Peoples Temple which said that their people in Jonestown had called and there were some people from Jonestown that wished to leave with the Congressional party, that this was a number of, as I recall, six to ten people were given, and therefore there was a request that the embassy provide additional transport in order to bring those people out at the same time as the Congressional party.

There was no indication of anything having to do with motivation of this, but that is the report that the embassy did receive, and has been repeated to me by embassy officials.

Q Mr. Bushnell, yesterday morning at the first briefing, the State Department had said really nothing in reply to a question. The spokesman said, "We didn't warn the Congressman." Yesterday afternoon, the State Department said it had given him logistical warnings. This morning you mention he was informed of armaments, armed guards, and other problems.

I am wondering if all of this comes down to that he really was being told without the actual words being used that State would rather he not go in there,

that it was unsafe, that it was dangerous, that he might lose his life?

A Let me try to put this in perspective in the following way. We have had over the last, more than a year, a great many conversations by State Department people with the Congressman and particularly with various members of his staff. He was, of course, interested in the situation there. It was a matter important to his office, to him, and to his constituency.

We were very aware in the State Department that just as our Desk Officers were seeing individuals who had left the colony, that the Congressman and his staff were seeing these same individuals. In fact, we would often refer an individual that would come to one of their offices first to come to the office. So we were aware from this longer series of discussions that the Congressman had essentially the same body of knowledge about this situation as we had. In fact, there are many of us which assume that if anything, he might have, in some aspects, have known more than we did, because he had reports from his constituency, from his office, and so forth.

So it was not as though -- and I think this is

perhaps the misimpression that has gotten around -- that when the Congressman came to see us, we began to brief him, as though this was a new situation which he had no familiarity with.

Obviously he had immense familiarity with it. He knew virtually almost as much about it as we did, so that to a considerable extent, what we concentrated on briefing him were those things we thought he would not have been familiar with; for example, on what our consular officers who had been visiting the area had done, what they had encountered there, and so forth, such as the presence of armed guards in the camp, and the very difficult problems that we would face in handling a Congressional delegation, of moving them up there, particularly if, in addition to the official members of the party there were other members of the party that wanted to go at the same time, and so forth.

It did not seem to the people that were giving this briefing that they needed to say in so many words that this was a dangerous undertaking. I think that that was, in some respects, clear to everyone involved in the issue.

On the other hand, I suppose in some respects, it has been somewhat dangerous, in retrospect, at least, for our consular officers to be going in there once a month, and yet they have been doing that, and doing it successfully for some time.

So that is the general perspective of which one should look at this situation of what we told the Congressman and his staff beforehand.

Q Mr. Bushnell, can you assume that the State Department in the field would know more than a Congressman hearing reports from his constituents? Shouldn't one assume that the analysis from the scene would have more than -- just meetings with people would have some kind of independent assessment from other local sources, that there were other things, such as the mass suicide pact afoot?

A As I said, we did brief the Congressman on what the embassy had sent in. That was the particular view which we could add to the view that he was getting independently from people who had been there, and so forth.

I do not myself have any personal knowledge about any so-called suicide pact, and so forth. We do

have, as you know, we operate under considerable restraints in terms of our own constitutional provisions on religious freedom, and so forth. And I think all consular officers of the Foreign Service have to be circumspect in the sorts of questions in terms of religious ceremonies and so forth that they might ask, and information that we might ask of that nature.

So that I think we did share with him the sort of information that we had in giving him as full a briefing on the situation as we could.

[See Section D.]

Q I wonder if, picking up on being circumspect, do you suppose that possibly why your officials were able to get in and out safely, and possibly why your officials were not able to find anybody who was being held against his will was because possibly -- and I don't want to put words in your mouth, but I'd like you to speculate -- they were so circumspect that they didn't ruffle anybody or dig too deeply? Could that have been the reason? That they had no trouble, where Ryan did?

A I won't let you put any words in my mouth on that, but let me just say this --

Q I know the First Amendment, too.

A --that the consular officer has a certain service to provide, issuing birth certificates, passports, the various sorts of things that he needs to do. This brings him in very direct personal contact with a wide range of people. The individual consular officers requested to see the individuals where they had received requests from family members; those individuals appeared, talked with them. The consular officers had previously

read the letters from their involved family members of what they had said; they explored what was said in those letters; they talked back and forth. I think I would at least argue that our consular officers are, by and large, and certainly our ones in Guyana are very sensitive individuals. They would certainly not try to embarrass any American citizen sitting in front of him, but they, since they would then go back and themselves draft what in many cases was an agonizingly hard letter to draft, describing to the family member what they had found, I think they would watch for the nuance, they would watch for what was said in order to get a feeling for that situation.

Q Can I ask, then, what is your explanation -- Wait a minute. I want to follow that: What is your explanation for why your people could go in and out with apparent ease and those people got gunned down on the runway?

A Until we have a lot more facts, I think we would just be speculating on this situation. Obviously, something happened there at a critical time. If we look back over it, a Congressional delegation was admitted to the camp, it was there for some time; the

shooting occurred, not at the camp but at the airport. Obviously, this raises a large number of questions and we simply do not have the answers to those questions, and we have a lot of investigating to do, a lot of people to talk to. I suspect, as often in those cases, the stories will not be identical -- we will have to do some sorting out of the situation. There is, obviously, a difference between a substantial Congressional delegation and the visit of an individual consular officer who is coming on, what is generally perceived to be important business in terms of establishing the rights of American citizens of the other people in the compound.

Q Mr. Bushnell, I would like to follow up that question also. The question I would raise with you is whether a consular officer going in would be empowered to say, "I'm prepared to take you out with me if in fact you want to leave." Might that not be a significant difference between what a consular officer has to say and what Congressman Ryan had to s

A What the consular offi[illegible] could have done in that case, of course, never arose. However, we did

not, as I have said, encounter any situation in which anyone indicated to a consular officer that he or she wished to leave the camp and was being detained, if he was.

Q That's not the question I was raising. The question I was raising was whether a consular officer would volunteer the information that if someone wanted to leave, he, with the power of the U.S. Government behind him, was prepared to facilitate that.

A I think that it would be implicit or explicit in what he said that should an individual indicate that he wished to leave, that he would work towards that end.

Q But would he initiate that subject? Would he say, "If you want to leave, we will help you?"

Q Today.

A Let me go back to the "today" part. I think that what he would have in mind and what he would communicate would not be that he as one individual would put his arm around somebody and necessarily escort them out of a camp. However, there are many ways in which this could be done. My own experience would suggest that

if he determined that there were someone whom, that there was even a strong presumption to believe was being held there against him will, he would have consulted with the Guyanese officials who had responsibility in order to have them make sure that there was not any sort of illegal kidnapping sort of activity going on.

MR. CARTER: I'm not cutting this off, I've been asked for a filing break for some, so a filing break and we'll go on.

(Filing break.)

Q Did your fragmentary evidence indicate when the pact was arranged, was it after Ryan's death?

A I have absolutely no information on that.

Q When are the bodies coming back and where?

Q What can be done with the Congressman's body, for example?

A The autopsies have been performed; by this time they should have been completed. We will be flying the bodies of the five dead Americans back to the United States. The present planning which we have, of which all the times and details are not completely firm, would

suggest that the bodies will be back in the United States and probably at the appropriate locations in the United States by dawn tomorrow.

Q Were the autopsies done by the American team or were they done by Guyanese officials?

A The autopsies were done by Guyanese officials. There was present a pathologist whom we flew down, an American.

Q Just to clarify, when you referred to murder and suicide in your initial comment, were you referring to murders beyond those that we are aware of, in other words, Congressman Ryan and the NBC --

A I, at this point, have no basis for saying that there were murders beyond those that took place at the airport. Those we have quite a strong basis for, of course. But actually in the camp, as I said, the initial report from the police officials there indicated no external signs of trauma on the bodies. That is all we have to go by, but I would certainly not want to suggest that there were murders there. I would also not

necessarily suggest that there were not. We just don't know yet.

Q On the return of the bodies, you say to the appropriate places, are these going, is each body going to be routined to its home town separate, or are they all coming in on one plane and then being transferred?

A Where the bodies will be delivered, of course, will be worked out with the next-of-kin, and we will deliver them in that way. Depending on the finalization of all those arrangements, I do not know at this point whether they will all leave Guyana on the same plane or that they will leave in a couple of planes going to different destinations. Those details remain to be worked out. We have an immensely complicated, at the moment, program of aircraft movements taking in supplies and helicopters and so forth taking out the bodies of these people. We, of course, have another problem down the line which involves the bodies of the people in Jonestown.

Q Mr. Bushnell, I know you are busy, but could you do this again toward the end of the day?

A I would be prepared to meet with a group at some time towards the end of the day. What is the best time, from your point of view?

Q Four o'clock, please.

Q Four or four-thirty.

MR. CARTER: Will you have enough news --

MR. BUSHNELL: The later, of course, the more that we will have. I think we will have something more probably by 4:30.

Q Say, 5:00?

Q No. 4:30 -- deadlines, 4:30.

Q Mr. Bushnell, you may have answered this: Was any attempt made to elicit any information from the legal counsel who were representing the Peoples Temple about what conditions may have been like, there?

A - Any attempt made by the State Department?

Q Yes.

A We have had some conversations with their legal counsel, both on individual problems such as custody problems and on the general situation.

Q Mr. Bushnell, I'm finding it difficult to understand. If this group was causing enough concern to

warrant once-a-month visits by your consular officers, when they would issue birth certificates and whatnot, and since it is so unusual for a religious group to transplant itself in large numbers to a foreign country, why you don't have a real count on who these people were. Did you have any discussion with the Guyanese Government as to how many were there, why they were there really, and why the Guyanese let them stay there?

A Let me say this, that in relation to the count it is the normal procedure that American Embassies everywhere in the world ask that Americans resident in the country register with them, giving their addresses, phone numbers and so forth, so that they are registered with the Embassy. This request has been made repeatedly, both of individual Americans and of the group leaders at the Peoples Temple but very few in fact registered.

Now, in terms of your visit of once a month, the primary controlling factor was not an element of concern, it was a matter of trying to provide consular services to a substantial number of Americans in a very isolated location. The reason [illegible] because we were

concerned about them in some sense. We were going there to provide the consular services of issuing birth certificates, death certificates, passports, all of these sorts of things that we do for Americans overseas, and because it was inherently inconvenient for them to come to the Embassy, which is what we would normally require of people in this situation. They would be expected to come to the Embassy for these services. There were, as you know, a great many young people in the camp. There were frequent births, and so forth, and that was what controlled the approximately once-a-month visits.

Q John, when the Department received complaints or inquiries from relatives of people in Jonestown, to follow up, who exercised the principal policy and administrative control in terms of referring these to the Embassy? Would this be ARA or was it the Bureau of Consular Affairs?

A I suppose it would depend on who got the letter first. They would come in in some cases to Consular Affairs; they would come in in some cases to ARA. The desk officers and the people working on that in Consular Affairs would coordinate. In most cases, if it were

were sort of non-specific, general requests for information that would be required, it would be provided by the appropriate bureau; in other cases, it would be referred to the Embassy. In the sort of cases where we have raised where the letter made the accusation that an individual was being held there in some respects against his will, then the consular officer on his next visit would try to talk with that person, and as I said, had been successful in doing so, and would them himself prepare the response, either directly or back through channels here depending on what was appropriate.

Q What channels?

Q What I was getting at was, in the days just prior to the last visit to Guyana, the visit that Congressman Ryan made to Guyana, was any consultation done with Mr. Lane or Mr. Garry about the probability or the possibility of such an event as took place on [illegible]?

A I doubt if someone had that sort of an event. There were some contacts, I think, between some

State Department people and between the Congressman's office and these people. I am not fully informed at this point on that, so I cannot answer that question very definitively.

MR. CARTER: The Deputy is going to be back again this afternoon. He has done fifty minutes and he really ought to get back to work.

I'll be happy to pick up the briefing on other subjects or see what I can do even on this one.

Thanks a lot, John. I appreciate it.

(Mr. Buchnell left the briefing.)

Q Bodding, could you just be more specific on the subject of what transportation has been provided, what types of military --

A Let me suggest on that that you call Tom Ross or Tom Lambert at the Department of Defense. I talked to him this morning about it. It seems to me they have the best sense of the scheduling and the equipment. A couple 141's, I know, but beyond that, I do not know.

Q [illegible] for the

A Yes. 4:30.

Q Hodding, on the transportation thing, would this fall under calling the other gentlemen, too? There was an indication from one of the Task Force people earlier that the transport bringing the bodies back might be held up for a time, pending the arrival of the folks into Jonestown and depending on what they found if they had people there in need of quick medical evacuation and so on? Is that the situation, do you know?

A I don't know. I know what the Deputy tried to cover was that you have two different problems here. You are going to end up with several hundred bodies up a Jonestown, which is going to be a distinct problem. The you have the ones that were killed at the airfield, who, I think, are coming separately and first. But again, I think the best source now for the logistics of this -- i is military aircraft that is being used -- would be def I'm just backing it there because I think they are the most up-to-date on it.

(The briefing on other subjects continued by Mr. Carter.)